GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2679
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2002
INFILTRATION THROUGH COAST
PRAKASH V. PATIL;SHANKAR PRASAD JAISWAL

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned `Konkan Coast: 600 KM invitation to terror` appearing in the Indian Express dated July 9, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereon; and

(c) the manner in which the Government propose to check terrorists infiltration in the country through the long Konkan coast?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (c): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2679 FOR 1.8.2002

A merchant ship reported sighting of an abandoned merchant ship `MV Al Murtada` on 3rd July, 2002 in position 84 nautical miles west of Ratnagiri (110 nautical miles south of Mumbai). Coast Guard Ship Vijaya was sailed to monitor the movements of the vessel and boarded her on 6th July, 2002 and subsequently anchored the ship about 5 nautical miles of Devgarh (155 nautical miles south of Mumbai). During the preliminary search of the vessel, two AK 47 rifles with words `ALLAH` and `YUSUF` inscribed in Urdu were recovered. On further rummaging, 3 loaded magazines of AK 47 bore (74 rounds) were also recovered. An Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of Navy also embarked the ship on 9th July, 2002 to sanitise the vessel of any explosives.None were found. As intimated by International Maritime Bureau the last owner of the ship is Mr. Assem Nidal Beaini, Lebanon.

The surveillance and patrolling off the West coast is jointly done by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard.Besides, Indian Coast Guard has institutionalised a system wherein merchant ships transiting through the Indian maritime zones are encouraged to pass information in case any suspicious vessel is sighted.